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Participant Information Form for project called: The power of design on flexible learning and digital network literacy.

A research evaluation is being conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the course called *Designing for Flexible Learning Practice*. This is one of the compulsory courses in the Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Learning and Teaching programme. The researchers are seeking your participation in the research evaluation project.

What is the aim of the project?

In this project, the researchers will be evaluating the *Designing for Flexible Learning Practice* course against three eLearning guidelines taken from eLearning Guidelines for NZ at: http://elg.massey.ac.nz/ The three eLearning guidelines are as follows:
- TD11 - Should staff use a team approach to develop and teach the course?
- TD12 - Is the design of learning informed by research on effective eLearning?
- TO9 - Are staff encouraged to participate in networks and learning communities involved in reviewing, developing or sharing good practice in the use of e-learning?

Additionally, there will be an investigation into how strategies, which are used to promote network learning and engagement in learning communities, influence participants' digital network literacy and level of self-efficacy for eLearning.

Please note: Definitions of digital network literacy and self-efficacy in eLearning can be found at the end of this sheet. The project is part of a bigger project called: Implementing e-Learning Guidelines across the Tertiary Sector, and is resourced by the 2007/2008 Innovation and Development Fund supplied by the Tertiary Education Commission.

How will potential participants be identified and accessed?

All participants who have completed the course called *Designing for Flexible Learning Practice*, and the course requirements are invited to take part in the research evaluation. You will receive this information both by email and internal post along with the invitation to participate.

What will my participation involve?

Should you agree to take part in this project you will be asked to do the following:
1. Complete a survey - this will contain general demographic questions and also questions about digital networking and confidence in using eLearning methods. It is expected the survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

2. Participate in a one hour long focus group - this will be facilitated by an interviewer who was not involved in teaching or administering the course. The purpose of the focus group will be to explore aspects of your experience participating in the course which are related to digital network literacy and your

perceptions of your own abilities in this area. The focus group discussion will build on general information obtained in the survey. Data will be obtained during the focus groups using notes and audio recordings. Focus group recordings will be transcribed and analysed for patterns and themes.

3. Check the transcription of the focus group session; this is optional – it is expected to take up to 30 minutes of your time.

4. Give separate permission for any material submitted for assessment in the course to be examined by all or some of the researchers – Leigh Blackall, Terry Marler and Bronwyn Hegarty - to determine whether digital networking has occurred and its extent.

5. Confirm specifically whether parts of your assessments can be quoted anonymously or not (your choice) in the research findings – the actual quotes will be checked with you prior to publication.

Please note: Participation in any part of the research is optional, and you can take part in the survey and focus group and choose not to allow an investigation of your assessments if this is your preference. In total, your participation in the project is expected to take approximately one hour and fifty minutes, depending on whether you choose to check the transcription of the focus group.

How will confidentiality and/or anonymity be protected?

All material collected during the course of the project will be kept confidential between the researchers and interviewer. Raw data will be coded for the purposes of analysis. Transcriptions of the focus group interviews will be identified using codes for names. Only pseudonyms will be used in the project reports and publications and any information which could potentially identify participants will be excluded.

What data or information will be collected and how will it be used?

Results of this project will be published in a report and possibly in a journal article and/or used at a presentation in an academic conference. Any data included will in no way be linked to any specific participant or department. The findings will also be presented as a case study and will contribute to the bank of case studies of best practice being created as part of a larger project called: Implementing e-Learning Guidelines across the Tertiary Sector; a larger Innovation Development Fund (IDF) project, supported by TEC. You may request a copy of the results of the project and it will be available by contacting the researchers whose contact details can be found below.

Data collected from the surveys, focus groups and assessments will be used to determine whether the design and implementation of the DFLP course met the three eLearning guidelines mentioned in the previous section. The data will help form a holistic picture of how "strategies, which are used to promote network learning and engagement in learning communities, influence participants' digital network literacy and level of self-efficacy for eLearning." (p11, ethics application, 396). This will be presented as a case study of the course, not as individual case studies so there will be no linking to individuals in any of the findings or reports or presentations about the findings.

Data Storage

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the researchers will have access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed. Any raw data on which the results are based will also be destroyed at completion of the project, and only results will be retained in secure storage for a period of two years, after which they will be destroyed.

Can participants change their minds and withdraw from the project?

You can decline to participate without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time, without giving reasons for your withdrawal. You can also withdraw any information that has already been supplied until the stage agreed on in the consent form. You can also refuse to answer any particular question, and ask for the audio to be turned off at any stage.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact:

Bronwyn Hegarty – ph: 4793600 or email: bronwynh@tekotago.ac.nz

Any additional information given or conditions agreed to will be noted on the consent form.

Definitions

Digital network literacy - while still emerging as a new form of literacy, may be defined by the following statement: "...the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms" The New Media Consortium (2004). A global imperative: The report of the 21st Century literacy summit: http://www.newmediacenter.org/pdf/Global_Imperative.pdf

Self-efficacy in eLearning is defined as: "The belief people have in their own abilities to perform in particular areas related to eLearning. The higher the level of self-efficacy the more confident one is to deal with challenges in eLearning " (Hegarty, B., Penman, M., Brown, C. & Coburn, D. et al. (2005). Approaches and implications of eLearning adoption in relation to academic staff efficacy and working practice. lead researcher and writer of the report. Universal College of Learning & Ministry of Education. Available at: http://cms.steo.govt.nz/eLearning/Projects/Tertiary+%28e%9Learning+Research+Fund+%28TeLRF%29.htm Ministry of Education New Zealand.)